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SUNDAY POST-DISPATCH

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CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

SHORTAGE FEARS

AREA HOSPITALS • PROTECTIVE GEAR IS RATIONED

MISSOURI • EXPERIENCING A STEEP JUMP IN CASES

NORTHEAST • TRAVEL ADVISORY SET FOR 3 STATES

THE TOLL	Missouri	Illinois	St. Louis	St. Louis Co.	St. Charles Co.	Jefferson Co.	Franklin Co.	Metro East
	838/10	3,491/47	93/1	313/2	37/2	17/0	11/0	31/1

Cases/deaths as of 8 p.m. Saturday

LAURIE SKRIVAN, LSKRIVAN@POST-DISPATCH.COM

Devonte Hamilton walks past Michelle Sheeley, owner of Orpheum Cleaners on Grand Avenue, as she sews masks at her dry cleaning and alteration business on Friday. "Business is slow. Since I can sew I wanted to help the community. We are all in this together," Sheeley says.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Measures to stretch supplies questioned

BY ERIN HEFFERNAN AND ANNIKA MERRILEES
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ST. LOUIS — Hospitals in the St. Louis area are rationing protective equipment for health care workers to avoid running out of supplies as the coronavirus epidemic intensifies across the region.

Nurses and other front-line medical workers at BJC HealthCare, SSM Health, Mercy and a VA medical center say leaders are asking some staff to reuse masks, are putting limits on sanitation materials and are setting new policies on how protective gear can be used.

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MISSOURI CASES

600% increase last week led the nation

BY BRYCE GRAY AND JANELLE O'DEA
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ST. LOUIS — There is no sign of a dip in coronavirus cases in St. Louis or Missouri. The region's caseload is rocketing upward, with the state seeing a more than 600% increase in total cases over the past week — the largest percentage increase in the country as of Thursday, according to data collected by Johns Hopkins University.

And a lack of widespread testing largely means that experts aren't sure when the region will reach the peak of

Please see MISSOURI, Page A4

US RESPONSE

Trump considered NY area quarantine

BY ZEKE MILLER AND COLLEEN LONG
Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. — President Donald Trump backed away from calling for a quarantine for coronavirus hot spots in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, instead directing Saturday night that a "strong Travel Advisory" be issued to stem the spread of the outbreak.

The notion of a quarantine had been advocated by governors, including Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, who sought to halt travelers from the heavily affected areas to their states. But

Please see VIRUS, Page A5

JUST A MATTER OF TIME

Hospital-poor rural Missouri county braces for coronavirus

JESSE BOGAN, JBOGAN@POST-DISPATCH.COM

A note posted on the emergency room door at the former Southeast Health Center of Reynolds County, which closed in 2016, informs residents that the nearest hospital is about an hour away. There are no hospital beds left in rural Ellington, Mo.

BY JESSE BOGAN
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ELLINGTON, Mo. — There has always been a trade-off in Reynolds County, where it is as rugged as it is isolated. Residents often drive long distances to buy new boots, phones and cars. Then they get to leave the bustle behind and retreat back to their way of life in the Mark Twain National Forest and other woods.

"That is my church sometimes," Frances Vermillion, director of the Reynolds County Health Center, a public clinic, said of the rivers and trees.

The coronavirus threat has thrown a wrench into the sense of peace where the biggest town in the county, Ellington, has 987 people. They can't just leave the city behind them on this one.

Each trip to a regional center like Salem, Poplar Bluff and Farmington increases the risk of bringing infection back home. Though test results have been slow to come back, there have been no reported cases of COVID-19 in Reynolds County.

Vermillion thinks it's just a matter of time because, as remote as it is, residents do travel to places that

Please see RURAL, Page A8

THE LATEST

ST. LOUIS SPIRIT

Residents find a way to connect during the pandemic • STL LIFE

SAVING SPRING

Some nurseries are going curbside in a bid to survive • BUSINESS

In Missouri, no relief for 80-year-old inmate • A2

State workers continue to process tax returns • A2

Virus digest: News of note from around the region • A3

Traffic officers quarantined, police union says • A7

Missouri halting gas station gambling machines • A8

Three months into outbreak, what do we know? • A11

Pandemic is redefining 'essential' across globe • A11

Doctors in US hot spots fear 'tsunami' of patients • A13

For up-to-the-minute news on the coronavirus outbreak, go to **stltoday.com**

TODAY
66°/43°
MOSTLY SUNNY

TOMORROW
66°/44°
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WEATHER
D9

Gearing up

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